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Testimony in **Opposition to House Bill 6825, Section 5**
An act making deficiency appropriations
and addressing the deficit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015

by
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Esteemed Chairs and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **opposition** to House Bill 6825, Section 5, proposing to transfer funds from the Community Investment Act Fund (CIA) for general fund use for this fiscal year. This provision is extremely detrimental to conservation efforts in our state and **will prevent important open space and urban greening projects from ever moving forward**. It will also halt progress on farmland preservation, historic properties preservation and affordable housing development, important programs for which this fund was created, and which rely on the CIA's revenue stream each year to operate effectively.

I am the State Director of The Trust for Public Land, a national conservation organization that works with communities to protect the land and water that keep us healthy, inspired, and connected with nature and each other. We've protected over 6,200 acres in over 40 communities across the state. Our work is accomplished in partnership with municipalities, local land trusts, the federal government and the State of Connecticut, often using CIA funds. Our most recent victory, protection of 1,000 acres of coastal forest, The Preserve, is a prime example of communities coming together to conserve the state's most important natural and recreational resources. Though The Preserve did not use CIA funding, it is an example of the type of projects which have benefited from the funding in the past.

- The CIA funding has contributed to a project in **nearly every town and city** in Connecticut since the creation of the fund in 2005 and the return to the state on CIA investments is great. The funds are **highly leveraged** through local, federal, public and private funds, to the tune of 200%.
- The dedication of this revenue stream and the programs that it funds are **key to the success of conservation projects**. If CIA funding is swept to the general fund, the many programs that this revenue funds will come to a halt, preventing some conservation projects **forever**.
- CIA investments also **boost our local and state economies** through projects that contribute to the state's thriving outdoor recreation industry.

Please join us in opposition to this provision and remove it from the bill.